

ORAL HISTORY TAPE

NUMBER 3

INFORMANTS: Wallace Hensley

August 14, 1964

Stella (Mrs. Wallace Hensley)

INTERVIEWER: Lloyd Abelson

Chief Historian (Cumberland Gap National
Historical Park)

INT: The Settlement has always been interesting to me and we're trying to get different people on a tape recording for later use and also for a reference. The house that you lived in last, that was what we call the Wallace Hensley house, did anyone else live in that house?

INF: Yes, Henry Hensley did. Henry Hensley was my uncle.

INT: Was that after you left the last time...?

INF: No, before I left.

INT: Did Henry have a family up there?

INF: Yes.

INT: I know I talked to him here recently, he's living over in the Development.

INF: He married a woman that had a family. He didn't have any of his own when he lived up there.

INT: He has no other children, then, his own children, except the ones that are living with him now?

INF: That's right. He didn't have any of his own when he lived up there in the mountains.

INT: I failed to ask him, what was his first wife's name?

INF: Well, he's been married about three or four times. The first wife's name was Luverna Tate.

INT: Yes, I believe I've heard that name. Do you remember any of the other ones?

INF: Yeah, he married Virginia Daniel over here. He married Maud Taylor and he married a Milton.

INT: Getting back to the Settlement, when you lived up there you didn't own any land? Just your father's...?

INF: No, my father's and I rented from Gildersleeve.

INT: About how many acres did you have?

INF: I had about—at **Gildersleeve's (Gillis Lee)**, I had about 50 or 60 acres.

INT: And how much of that was in crop?

INF: Well, at one time we had, me and my brother and old man Burt Hensley and one of his sons, we had forty acres there in crops.

INT: You farmed it together then rather than having an individual plot of your own?

INF: That's right. We farmed it together.

INT: Did you have any horses?

INF: Oh, yes.

INT: Were they your own or were they...?

INF: They were my own. Yeah, I kept horses and mules.

INT: About how many horses did you have?

INF: Oh, I'd have from one to three.

INT: Which do you prefer, horses or mules for your field work?

INF: I prefer mules.

INT: The mules. And then when you were going off the Settlement you'd usually use horses?

INF: That's right.

INT: What were the general crops that you grew up there?

INF: Well, we grew corn, then oats, that's about all in the grain line except vegetables, we grew all kind of vegetables.

INT: How about sorghum?

INF: Yes we growed those. We growed cane so we could make molasses.

INT: Who had the mill?

INF: Old man Burt Hensley and my father, Sherman Hensley and old man Willie Gibbons, they had one between the three. They just went in and bought a mill between the three and they used it from one to the other.

INT: Was it just the regular roller mill?

INF: That's right.

INT: And it was pulled, turned by a horse or a mule?

INF: Horse-power or mule-power.

INT: Just one?

INF: Just one mule and he had a leader on top of it that you hooked to it and it went around and around.

INT: How about when you were pressing the cane, did you do it as a group or each person would go over and do it himself?

INF: Well, we'd, sometimes we'd help one another and sometimes there'd be a person doing it himself.

INT: Well, how about boiling it off? Did you have a tank for boiling it together or did each person boil it off at home?

INF: Each person just boiled it off at home. They just boiled it off up there for they found the cane up there. He used an old time box, what you call an old time box, not an evaporator but a box. Some called it an evaporator and some called it a box. An evaporator is a thing that's got places in it, put the juice up there and when it comes out there in the bottom it goes through them little racks, you see, that way when it gets put in the air it's suppose to be cool, some. So we'd put it all in one big box and boil it down and have us...

INT: Now this box, was it metal?

INF: Yeah, yeah it was...

INT: One of these big cast-iron type of...?

INF: No, it was made out of heavy steel, the sides of it were wooden and the bottom of it, the sheeting of it come up over the sides you see on the wood part. The bottom part of it was metal where the fire was up against it.

INT: You mentioned the hogs that were up there and something about the individual brands, what was your particular brand?

INF: Well, mine was swoop left and split the right and swoller part and underbit the left. It's a trade of my dad's, my dad's was swoop right and split the left swoller part and underbit the right.

INT: About how many hogs did you have?

INF: I had all the way from three or four up to maybe twenty.

INT: What did you usually do, how did you usually do it as far as the hogs were concerned, did you take them off and sell them or did you have a round up in the fall?

INF: Oh, we'd sell some and things and we'd just let them go to raise more then we'd lose some of them some way or another and never find them.

INT: Did you do most of your butchering in the winter time or in the fall?

INF: Before summer time comes, you know.

INT: I notice that the hog pens were very small, how did you use them?

INF: Well, we'd have from two to four, sometimes five in the pen in a small pen. That's the one we'd killed, we'd put them up and feed them grain.

INT: In your butchering, how did you do that? Did you skin them or scald them?

INF: No, we'd scald them, pour water and scald.

INT: When you put up meat, how did you preserve it?

INF: Well, we had a-what you call smokehouse, benches in there and we salted that meat down on that and let it stay so long-so many days, then we'd hang it.

INT: Did you ever make the Kentucky hams or the...?

INF: Oh, yes.

INT: Did you ever do any smoking of it?

INF: No.

INT: Well, how about beef, did you ever butcher them?

INF: Yes, we've done that, Dad did, I never done that for myself.

INT: Did you ever put up any of that in the smokehouse or...?

INF: Oh, yeah.

INT: Well would you do that the same way, salt it down or would you...?

INF: Oh, no, no, take and when you kill a beef, why you dress it then you take towels and dry the blood all off of it. You don't put no water or no salt on it, dry it off with towels and then hang it in the smokehouse where it will dry out and don't stack it up or lay it down or anything but hang it up so it will dry out.

INT: You also mentioned that there were quite a few sheep up there, did you have any?

INF: No, I didn't have any, my father did, old man Gibbons, Burt Hensley, Barney Thompson.

INT: How about, did you ever butcher the sheep?

INF: Oh, yes, many a one.

INT: Do you like mutton?

INF: Yes I do.

INT: Well usually this part of the country, people don't care much about mutton.

INF: Yes, we used to have mutton in the fall, you know. We'd go out and kill one in the fall about-in October sometime and bring them in, you know and lots in the winter. We'd catch us one and kill it and I was always the one that had to shoot him, my dad never did like to. Take an old hog rifle and shoot him.

INT: Did you make use of the wool?

INF: Oh, yeah.

INT: Did you do your own shearing?

INF: Yes.

INT: Was there anyone in particular that was an expert at shearing or...?

INF: Yeah, my mother was the best.

INT: Is that right?

INF: That's right.

INT: And how would you use the wool? Would you sell it or...?

INF: Well we, why we'd always when we'd shear, my mother would take us kids and we'd watch this wool and dry it then we'd take it to Cumberland Gap to the woolen mill and swap it to cloth, blankets, coverlets, what we wanted and then if there was anything left taken the money for the rest.

INT: Do you recall how long they had this woolen mill at Cumberland Gap?

INF: No, I don't. I wouldn't know.

INT: Most of the fences around the Settlement were handmade. The main purpose of the fences was to keep the hogs out of the fields rather than to pen them up, wasn't it?

INF: That's right. We made a fence and put around what we planted and what we had in the meadow and then we took our stock on the outside. And we'd have fields fenced in that we had in grass and when we wanted to put stock in on it we'd put certain stock in there and pasture them. What we wanted outside on the range why we turned out.

INT: The cattle, you usually kept them fenced in, didn't you?

INF: That's right.

INT: Well, what about the sheep?

INF: Well, some of them pastured sheep but most of them turned them out and let them go in the woods.

INT: Did you have any dogs?

INF: Yes, we had several.

INT: How did you use them, I mean were they just house pets or were they...?

INF: No they were hunting dogs.

INT: Any particular kind?

INF: Well, some had hounds, some had what they called “curs”, some had **fistes (fiest’s)**.

INT: Did you use them any for rounding up your hogs in the fall?

INF: Yes, we’d catch hogs with them then we had regular hog dogs to catch hogs with.

INT: And they were different from your hunting dogs?

INF: Yes.

INT: Well, for hunting, what did you have? Coon dogs…?

INF: Well, coon dogs, squirrel dogs, most any went up trees.

INT: What was the main type of hunting that you did?

INF: Well, the biggest hunting I guess was squirrel hunting and coon hunting.

INT: Any bobcats or wildcats?

INF: Yes, they was several of them things. I never did catch one of them myself in a tree, tree them, I’ve caught them in traps and killed them.

INT: How about deer?

INF: Never did see a wild deer in my life.

INT: Is that right? Any bear?

INF: No, seen signs but no bear. Seen deer signs but never did ever see one.

INT: We were talking a little bit the other day about the social activities. One of the games that you described that the boys played was fox and geese, can you explain how that’s played.

INF: Well, it’s something similar to checkers. You draw it off on a board and use twelve grains of corn or two buttons or what they call “foxes” and then we’d take, be checked off like a checker board and then we take them corn grains, didn’t have no checkers, tried to hem these foxes. Every time you got a chance you’d pick everyone you could, you know, like playing checkers, something similar to checkers. They call it fox and the goose and it’s so simple to play.

INT: Well, how about the adults in the winter time when time got a little long on your hands did you have any type of cards or games that you got together with?

INF: Oh yes, we’d meet up at one another’s houses and play what we’d call “frettin’ back” till way in the night. Then we’d have horseshoe games.

INT: Who was the best horseshoe player?

INF: Old man Willie Gibbons.

INT: Did you have regular contests?

INF: Well, we'd play what you call "two up and two down" you know.

INT: What kind of horseshoe would you use, just any kind of regular horseshoe?

INF: Just a regular horseshoe.

MRS. WALLACE HENSLEY: I'd ask in all the neighbors to have a bean shelling and everybody on the mountain, most everybody would come and sit out and help you shell your beans. We'd have a big sheet, you know, in the middle of the floor full of beans, dried beans. I would sometimes have a green bean stringing. Why, I'd have so many green beans that I couldn't hang them and I'd have a bean stringing and they'd help me hang them and I'd get them hung up.

INT: And you did this to preserve them for winter use?

MRS. WALLACE HENSLEY: Yes.

INT: In connection with the fences, what was the type of material you used for—is there a difference between say your rail fence and your paling fence?

INF: Yeah, we used the same kind of—we used oak for palings and we used mostly chestnut wood for rail fence.

INT: The oak is a little harder to split, isn't it?

INF: That's right, a little harder to split.

INT: Were you up in the Settlement when they had that big fire around 1950? Do you recall that?

INF: That's right, yes sir, I helped fight it.

INT: Well, that burned up a lot of the rail fence up there, didn't it?

INF: Oh, yeah.

INT: Do you have any idea how much?

INF: Oh, three or four thousand panel, I guess.

INT: Do you know how the fire started?

INF: No, I don't.

INT: Did it get up pretty close to the buildings up there?

INF: Oh, yes! It burned a big barn there that I had built myself.

INT: That was the barn behind your house?

INF: That's right.

INT: The house that you were living in, you bought the material for that in didn't you? From down on Martin's Fork or someplace?

INF: On the north side of Brush Mountain, down on the base of the mountain, over by the Wilson place. It was hewed out there and they'd moved away and been gone for several years and I tore the house down and hauled it up there with mules and put it up there.

INT: Did you split the boards for the roof? Or did you use old ones?

INF: No, I made new boards myself.

INT: Did you have any help or did you do all the work yourself?

INF: Well, I had help cutting it and sawing it in the box. Then I bursted it up into what they called board bolts and then I rolled them myself.

INT: Part of that house looked like it had new construction on it. Did you build that north side on it afterwards?

INF: Well, no, I didn't put that on.

MRS. HENSLEY: Herbert built some onto that house. Yeah, he built the kitchen onto that....

INF: Yeah, onto the back part of it. He built the kitchen part for the back side. The new part was built on the back side, my brother built that, Herbert.

INT: What types of wood was used in most of the logs?

INF: They were chestnut.

INT: The logs were chestnut. The fence is too?

INF: Yes.

INT: Well, those should last a long time then, I mean, you could use those for fixing up the other buildings.

INF: Oh, yeah, oh, most all them logs could be used in other buildings now.

INT: Well, in most of the buildings they used oak for the logs, didn't they?

INF: Well, some did, some didn't. They used the foundation now, what they call the skills and the sweepers was mostly out of oak, they used oak. The main sill over the foundation of the house was made out of white oak.

INT: I noticed that there were a lot of boards used on the sides over the chinking, are they just culls left over from the...?

INF: That's right, nearly most of them does that and some puts the best kind in...

INT: Some of them I know are much longer than those but I thought maybe these were left over. Well, how about the chinking, how often did you chink the houses?

INF: Well, generally whenever you would put one up, we called it stripping on the inside, you know, strip them cracks on the inside with dress boards and then we made up mud and daubed that between them logs. We daubed that with mud and then we'd put stripping over that on the outside and that was about all you ever had to do to that.

INT: You would have to re-daub them afterwards?

INF: No, hardly ever, unless you didn't strip it on the outside. If you stripped it on the outside you wouldn't ever have to mess with it anymore because if you didn't it would be washed out, rain would beat it out.

INT: Any particular type of clay that you used for mud?

INF: Well we tried to keep clay mud all the time as much as we could.

INT: Was there any particular spot up there that you got the mud from?

INF: Well most everywhere, we'd clean off the top, take the topsoil off, get down to the yellow edirt and take it off.

INT: I noticed that there were a lot of apple trees around there, were there any other type of fruit trees that were used.

INF: Oh, yes, we had grapes, we had peaches, we had apples, that's about all.

INT: How about the apples, did you lay them up for winter use?

INF: Oh, yeah, we'd gather them, we'd can them. Canning time come, late in the fall, we'd have winter fruit and we'd pick them and gather them in and hold them a lot of them in the buildings.

INT: I noticed that a lot of the cabins had storage wells under the puncheon, did you have any particular name for those?

INF: Yes, we had places under the floor and inside the house we called cellars. Used to fill them full of apples or potatoes, canned stuff you know to keep from freezing in the wintertime.

INT: Did you do much canning up there?

INF: Oh yeah.

MRS. HENSLEY: I put up three hundred quarts. We really did put up the food up there and we really had it to eat too. It was a real joy coming up to eat at our house.

INT: That really does make me hungry! Is there any particular foods I mean like for meats that was preferred? I think in this part of the country it's mostly different types of pork.

MRS. HENSLEY: We had plenty of chickens and anytime we wanted to kill a frying chicken if we had fryers or if we had hens, we killed a hen and dressed him.

INT: How about squirrels, did they...?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, we had quite a bit of squirrel. Ever so often they'd kill one, we'd take, if they were young squirrels they were usually fine, but if they were old squirrels we'd cook them and make dumplings out of them and they were good too!

INT: You mentioned helping work at the fire tower just directly across from White Rock, who employed you when you were working there?

INF: Well, the head official was over the tower there. Well, I was at Rosehill one day, what you call "trade day," where they always meet and swap horses, trade you know. There was a fellow come up to me and ask me what kind of mules did I have. And I told him well I had a pair of mules. He said, "Are they heavy mules?" I said, "Well, not too heavy but pretty good sized mules." "What kind of job would you pull to take a tower up on the mountain for me?" I said, "Well, I don't know hardly, I might." He said "Well, you can go down to Ewing and look at it and tell me what you think about it and what you'd take it up for a day." Well, me and Finley Hensley we went down and looked at it and we told him we'd take it up, eight dollars a day. And we hauled it from the foot of the Cumberland Mountain up to the White Rocks up where the tower sat, hauled it all up there with a mule team.

INT: Did you also do some work on the foundation?

INF: Yes, I done all the carry of the silling up, with the sand. Had to carry it up the Virginia side up the mountain and then come down to the Sand Cave and sack the sand up in the Sand Cave and carried it out around the cliff there, around the Hensley Sand Cave and then loaded it on a mule and packed it on that mule pair up on the...

INT: Well wasn't it quite a job getting around that ledge?

INF: Yes, it was. Lige Gibbons he went to sacking the sand up and carrying it around to the ledge to where I could get to it with a mules and I carried it up to the top to the tower.

INT: Do you remember the operation of the tower, who was up there? Did anyone from the Settlement ever work as fire warden at the tower?

INF: No, not out of the Settlement, none of them didn't.

INT: Was the Millard Taylor?

INF: Yeah, that's right, Millard Taylor he was fire warden up there and take care of the tower for quite a few years after it was built.

INT: Then of course the tower really gave you a wonderful view, especially in that blind spot down in Martin's Fork.

INF: That's right, all over the country, you could just about see everywhere.

INT: Now I think we'll switch over to you, Mrs. Hensley, and get back into the school. The Brush Mountain School as far as we know started about 1912 and before that there was a—was it you that said there was someone that taught in one of the homes?

INF: Old man Barney Thompson taught in his home, the first school ever I went to.

MRS. HENSLEY: Now, my daddy, Milton Callahan, he hauled that schoolhouse lumber up there to build that first schoolhouse. I've heard him tell it a many a time. We lived in Virginia.

INT: Did he help, I believe it was Garrett Wilson that built the school?

MRS. HENSLEY: My daddy didn't build it, he just hauled the lumber up there on the mountain to build it.

INT: And more of the other material, I understand, was just taken from the forest or woods around the Settlement?

MRS. HENSLEY: I believe it was.

INF: That's right.

INT: I believe in talking, I talked to Garrett Wilson, oh this was a year ago, and he said that, I don't recall who it was that worked with him, but they did it for, I believe it was Willie Gibbons.

INF: That's right.

INT: But they got forty dollars for building the school and now you can't build a schoolhouse for forty dollars a pupil. What was the first year you taught up there?

MRS. HENSLEY: 1926 and 27.

INT: Do you recall how many students you had in those years?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, I had eighteen or twenty, somewhere in the neighborhood of eighteen or twenty. Maybe not that many.

INT: You got your job from the Bell County School System, do you remember who was superintendent then?

INF: Otis Marcus.

MRS. HENSLEY: Otis Marcus was the trustee but there was a Wilson man, I can't think of his given name, he's still living, was the superintendent.

INT: Well, it doesn't matter. You mentioned something about you were only eighteen when you started teaching.

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, eighteen.

INT: Did you have any teaching, I shouldn't say experience, but training, before you started in?

MRS. HENSLEY: No.

INT: I'll bet you were a pretty frightened girl when you first went up there the first day with all those little....

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, I always wanted to be a schoolteacher, all my life. When I was a little girl I used to, on snowy days that I couldn't go to school, I would pretend like that I was another student and I was teaching myself. And I would write with my left hand, whenever I signed myself I wrote with my left hand, making myself a teacher and then a student. I always wanted to be a school teacher and I had that desire and yes, I was kindly frightened at first but I got settled and I really enjoyed it.

INT: Well, did you have any older boys in there that gave you a rough time?

MRS. HENSLEY: No, I never had no trouble with nobody. No bad trouble, they was all really good boys and girls, nice boys and girls, I'll just say that. They all respected me and they all seemed to like me and so we just got along fine.

INT: Did you have eighth grade at that time?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, I don't think, the best I remember, that I taught any farther than the fifth grade. From the first, well the primer at that time, primer and then the first grade and on through the fifth is as far as I had.

INT: Do you recall how much you were paid?

MRS. HENSLEY: Seventy-eight dollars.

INT: A year?

MRS. HENSLEY: A month, and I've still got my old contract here, Tandy Wilson was the superintendent.

INT: I imagine that was pretty good pay back then, wasn't it?

MRS. HENSLEY: It was, it was good pay. Seventy-eight dollars at that time went farther than what I draw now. I paid ten dollars a month for board.

INT: Who did you board with?

MRS. HENSLEY: I boarded with Burt Hensley and Mandy Hensley.

INT: And then would you stay there over weekends or did you usually...?

MRS. HENSLEY: Sometimes I would and then maybe every two or three weeks I'd go home, I lived in Virginia. We lived on Rayburn Robinson's farm.

INT: Your father was a farmer then?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, he was a farmer.

INT: Later on you taught again, what years was that?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, I started back teaching during World War II and that was in '44. I went back up on the mountain and started teaching, I taught one year, '44 and '45 then I went to Branham's Creek in '45 and taught till '47.

INT: Was there an increase in pay? Do you remember how much...?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, I got a little more pay each year, it wasn't the school that caused it, it was just that they increased you a little more each year, maybe two or three dollars. The first year I came back after, during the war in 1944 I got a hundred and nine dollars and eleven cents the best I can remember. The next year they raised me two dollars a month.

INT: Did you have any trouble getting school supplies from Bell County, I mean was this a problem?

MRS. HENSLEY: It was a problem getting them on the mountain. Of course we didn't have too many supplies, but I guess I got as much as I really needed. You know when you don't know what you really do need, you don't think too much about it.

INT: Could you describe the schoolroom in the new building?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, it was a good school, good little school building, it was log and it was sealed on the inside, over the floor, and the sealing and everything it was good lumber.

INT: The inside portion was that a type of wall board in there or what was it that they used to seal the logs, do you recall? I know, all that I could see on it was there were flooring strips and some kind of sheeting was put on the inside.

MRS. HENSLEY: No, it was filled with this regular sealing. It was nice sealing, I mean it was dressed lumber.

INT: But the walls, were they just boards then?

MRS. HENSLEY: No, the wall was logs.

INT: But there was something on top of the logs.

MRS. HENSLEY: Two-by-fours on the inside and it sealed over.

INT: But with what?

INF: With sealing, regular house sealing.

MRS. HENSLEY: I guess it was pine sealing.

INT: And this was on the ceiling and on the walls both? And they'd prepare narrow boards, tongue and groove-type of pine I imagine. I've notice some of the boards from the floor but I can never find it on the walls and certain strips were apparently close together and I thought that it would be something like you have on the walls here.

INF: No, it's like the tongue and groove sealing.

INT: How about your equipment?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, we had plenty of books and we had enough seats, regular desks, you know, that any other school had.

INT: These were steel frame, standard, surplus from some other school, were they not?

MRS. HENSLEY: Maybe they were I don't know, just the ones they furnished.

INF: Some were new and...

INT: You did get some new material up there, right? I'd wondered about that. Did you have a blackboard?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, I had a pretty good blackboard.

INT: How about the heating of the building?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, we had a stove and then we used wood, couldn't get any coal the time that I taught up there. There was two boys that cut the wood, they got it through the county, the county had paid them some of course. General Gibbons and Cliff Hensley, they chopped the wood, of course we burned wood.

INT: Like in the cold mornings, did you have to start the fire? Or were there some of the boys that came in and started it before you got there?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, sometimes they would start it for me and then sometimes they wouldn't have very good luck getting it started and I'd have to build it when I got there. It was awfully cold, I'll have to say that because wood just don't heat like coal.

INT: Did you have just a regular potbelly-type of stove?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, it was just a regular old stove.

INT: I don't know because the roof is gone, how did the chimney come out, did they have a regular chimney on it?

MRS. HENSLEY: They had a flue built and the stovepipe went into the flue.

INT: This didn't go out a window, did it?

MRS. HENSLEY: No, it was a flue, a little flue.

INT: And then out the top. As far as- like at recess I imagine it was pretty like other schools, I mean you didn't have any special equipment for them for play did you?

MRS. HENSLEY: No, didn't have anything except for—the children had their balls, their own balls, played ball and they usually would play some other kinds of games.

INT: Did they ever play "Annie-I-Over" or...?

MRS. HENSLEY: "Annie-Over" and the "fox and the Goose" and they played baseball.

INT: Where did you get your water?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, we had to carry it from Burt Hensley's spring, just down over the hill there.

INT: Now, is that the one that Finley Hensley lived by later?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes...

INT: That's the one out there. Was there another spring up above that one, closer to where Burt's house was?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, there was but it was kind of a wet-weather spring, it didn't run all the time just in the wintertime when it rained and then in the summertime when it was real dry it would go dry.

INT: This is kind of off the subject, but in the springhouses, were they used just for water or did they cool milk or things like that in there?

MRS. HENSLEY: They set their milk in the water, butter and if you had some canned stuff or beans or something left over that you were afraid would spoil why you'd go and set your kettle of beans or your can of food, whatever you'd opened if it was berries, apples or whatever it might be, you set it in the spring and it would keep longer in the summertime.

INT: In talking about food, the student did they bring their lunches to school or did they go home?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, most of them would go home for their lunch. They all lived close and most of the children would go home for their lunch.

INT: You did have spelling bees?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes.

INT: Was this for the students or did everyone come?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, you know there wasn't much to go to up there so on Friday evening, afternoon we'd go to school because that was usually the evening the teacher wasn't too particular and we'd just have spelling matches with the children.

INT: Then everyone participated in that?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, and I never will forget, I was a young girl and I'd taught school you know, and I never will forget the word I missed, I missed café, and so I never have forgotten how to spell café.

INT: Someone mentioned also that you taught Sunday school up there.

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, I had a Sunday school at one time up there and taught Sunday school as long as it was pretty weather and then when it got bad weather why I had Sunday school in my home.

INT: Did you have any particular church affiliation up there, I mean...?

MRS. HENSLEY: No, just different ones would come just most anybody that volunteered. They would come through there to have church.

INT: I heard one of the church connections there was the Church of the Brethern, is that right?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, some called them the Dunker Church it was the United Brethern Church and Paul Hensley, he used to come up there quite often. He was one of the, well, he was a cousin to Wallace, and Wallace's Mother's nephew.

INT: Where did you have your baptism?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, down, I never was at a baptizing but there has been baptizing up there down in Shellady Creek somewhere down in there.

INT: I understood it to be somewhere near to where the old mill was there was suppose to be...

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes.

INT: Then you would say that the predominant group was the Dunker or the Church of the Brethern.

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, I guess they were, yes.

INT: Do you know of any who was married in the Settlement? I should say at the Settlement.

MRS. HENSLEY: I don't know nobody myself, but Wallace, do you know of anybody that was married on the mountain, at the Settlement, Hensley Settlement?

INF: Old man Greg (inaudible) and Walsey Hensley was married up there.

INT: Did you ever go to any of the baptizing?

INF: Oh, yeah.

INT: Then this was of Shellady then?

INF: Yeah, down where the old mill used to sit.

INT: Then some preacher or minister would come in on a Sunday and you'd...?

INF: Old man John Taylor, he lived on the mountain up there and he was a minister. He baptized down there.

INT: This was in the early days that Taylor was up in the Settlement.

INF: That's right.

INT: In the later days, do you remember when the last one was there? Who was the last one?

INF: Powell Hensley was the last that helped services on the mountain there.

INT: How about the baptizing?

INF: Well, old man Taylor was about all the one that ever baptized any up there on the mountain.

MRS. HENSLEY: Uncle Tim Hare baptized up there, he baptized your brother Lige, I did know that.

INF: That's right.

INT: Were these the type where you would be totally immersed or would you be completely submerged?

MRS. HENSLEY: Now Uncle Tim Hare, he baptized by total immersing. The United Brethern, they lead you out into the water and they kneel down. I've seen them but I didn't see this on the mountain now, I've seen the United Brethern baptized and they lead you out into the water and get down on their knees and they baptize you three times face down.

INT: Then along the same line did you ever go to any of the decorations?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, I guess I was at every decoration for years but for the last few years I haven't been up there.

INT: Do you know about the last one that was held up there?

MRS. HENSLEY: There was a decoration held up there, we wasn't up there but there was a lot of people up there.

INT: Do you remember what year?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yeah, I guess that was between '52 and '55 probably. I couldn't say for certain.

INT: At these decorations was there any baptism or anything like that held in connection with it or was there just a general get together kind of like a reunion or kind of a combination reunion and revival?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, it was like a reunion and revival and a lot of preachers would come and there would be lots of different denominations and they would all preach and...

INT: How far away would people come for it, besides from the Settlement?

MRS. HENSLEY: From Virginia, down in Virginia and along down the creek, even from Tennessee.

INT: Do you know of any of the ministers that preached up there that are still around?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, Tom Hensley, he used to preach up there, he's still alive, and Baxter Hensley, of course he's dead. I can't think of any preachers that's still living that used to preach up there.

INT: Did the people from the settlement provide the food for all these people that came up there?

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, whenever I lived up there we always looked forward to the decoration and we'd start baking on Friday and cook on then until Sunday. We always fixed a big dinner.

INT: Now these were usually held at the schoolhouse?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes. The decorations were held at the schoolhouse.

INT: I don't see how you could possibly get a large crowd like that in the schoolhouse.

MRS. HENSLEY: Well, the church services were held at night, they had the church services always on Saturday night and they held it in the schoolhouse. What could, got in and what couldn't had to stand out. Of course it was really mild weather and it didn't hurt people.

INT: Did people come out Saturday then and stay over night?

MRS. HENSLEY: Oh, yes.

INT: But the most would come on Sunday, wouldn't they?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, the biggest part would come on Sunday. But on Saturday night we always had a crowd. Many times we didn't have bedrooms for them all and we'd have to make beds in the floor for people.

INT: that was the highlight of the year almost.

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, it was, I always looked forward to the decoration.

INT: Well, on Sunday, if you had most of the services on Saturday night the Sunday was more of a social get together?

MRS. HENSLEY: Yes, but they had preaching. Maybe preach two or three hours.

INT: And they'd have several different preachers.

MRS. HENSLEY: Several different preachers of different denominations and each preacher had his own, each preacher was allowed to preach and lots of times they would on Sunday if it wasn't bad weather they would meet maybe down in the woods where it would be shady. And they would cut down leaves for people to sit. Then whenever they got done preaching they would get to the cemetery and then again in the cemetery somebody would conduct prayer and sing and decorate the graves.

INT: I imagine around decoration time there wasn't much liquor around there, I guess it had entirely disappeared, hadn't it?

MRS. HENSLEY: I don't know.

INT: I imagine there was always someone that slipped off.

MRS. HENSLEY: They could get some of it I guess.

INT: This has been a taped interview with Stella and Wallace Hensley at their home in Middlesboro, Kentucky. The tape was taped on August 14, 1964, by Lloyd Abelson, Chief Historian at the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.